

REMARKS

Applicants' attorney thanks the Examiner for her comments. Independent Claim 1 has been amended to include the alternative limitations recited in Claims 2 and 3, which the Examiner found allowable if written in independent form. Independent Claim 18 has been amended to include the alternative limitations recited in Claims 19 and 20, which the Examiner found allowable if written in independent form. New Claim 32 corresponds to previous Claim 4, which the Examiner found allowable if written in independent form. New Claim 33 corresponds to previous Claim 21, which the Examiner found allowable if written in independent form.

All of the claims now recite subject matter which the Examiner has indicated would be allowed.

a) Claim Rejection Based on Salerno

The rejection of Claims 1, 8-9, 11-18 and 23-24 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,306,123 ("Salerno") is respectfully traversed. As to independent Claims 1 and 18, Salerno does not disclose or suggest an absorbent structure as claimed having a central longitudinal region and two distal longitudinal regions, wherein a) the central longitudinal region includes a higher concentration of bond points than in either of the two distal longitudinal regions, or b) the absorbent structure has an essentially uniform bond point concentration across the central longitudinal region and the two distal longitudinal regions. These limitations, which were individually recited in dependent Claims 2, 3, 19 and 20, are now alternatively recited in independent Claims 1 and 18. Accordingly, this claim rejection should be withdrawn.

As to new independent Claims 32 and 33, Salerno does not disclose or suggest an absorbent article as claimed having a central longitudinal region and two distal longitudinal regions, wherein the central longitudinal region includes a first binder material, and each of the two distal longitudinal regions comprises a second binder material having a higher melting point than the first binder material. These limitations, which were recited in dependent Claims 4 and 21, are now recited in independent Claims 32 and 33. Accordingly, the claim rejection is inapplicable to new Claims 32 and 33.

b) Conclusion

Applicants believe that the claims, as now presented, are in condition for allowance. If the Examiner detects any unresolved issues, then Applicants' attorney respectfully requests a telephone call from the Examiner, and a telephone interview.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maxwell J. Petersen".

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